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OUTLOOK NOTES

TEN years ago there would seem to have been but one question before our schoolmen, that of the curriculum. The word curriculum in those days connoted all there was so far as the arrangement of studies went. If "course of study" was used, it was only as a synonym for "curriculum;" the "program," if it had any special meaning at all, meant nothing more than time-table. The great organizations of secondary teachers, whether they met alone, or as a special privilege, with college teachers, were discussing whether "which" should precede "tother," whether tweedle dee developed chiefly the cerebrum or the cerebellum, and what was the exact educational value of tweedle dum. Everyone went around, too, with a chip on the shoulder; the classicist and scientist would fight at the drop of the handkerchief, the secondary man was coming to self-consciousness and beginning to wonder whether it was not time those college men had some of the conceit taken out of them, though how to do it was not so clear. There was some sort of an agreement to the effect that things were pretty bad, and that the other fellow had got to be reformed. So each man was valiantly tugging at the mote in his brother's eye, while the beams in all eyes were believed to be found concentrated in the curriculum. Revise the curriculum was then the educational as revise the creed is now the theological watch cry.

The Golden Age is not altogether upon us as we close the century, but no one can question that there has been a most hopeful change of emphasis in our educational discussions. Some of the questions we were so confident of solving a decade ago have been solved. Those of us who were most horrified at the mere idea of an elective system in a secondary school, have, for the most part, administered such systems ourselves with cheering results. Spite of the immense gain in science teaching in the schools, we have the figures of Dr. Harris to prove to us that the classics have not merely held their own, but actually gained in their relative hold on the schools. Some of us thought the question of the curriculum never could be solved until we had an exact science of educational values. We think so still, if by curriculum is meant an exactly prescribed mental regimen for the average, normal, developing human being. But we have found some difficulties here; for one, the "average child" does not exist; we find all sorts of children, but never a typical, average, normal child; for another, an exact science of educational values seems no nearer attainment now than it was in Aristotle's time. With no "average child" in sight to which to apply our ideal curriculum, no exact science on which to base it, we have rather given up the ideal itself. Indeed, some of our leaders think we have lost ourselves entirely and are trying vainly and pathetically to find out where we are at. There used to be a beginning, a middle, and an end to things. Some studies were universally stamped as common enough for the primary school, others everywhere recognized as so sacred as to belong by the divine right of kingship to the college. But now the alphabet is studied in the college, nay, in the university even, while we give the essence of Froebel's mystical metaphysics to babes in the kindergarten.

Yet are we not without hope. Old things must pass away before all things can become new. That the new will be so very different from the old is yet to be proved. Meanwhile, we are thinking more on whatsoever things are certain and

puzzling less over the hidden mysteries than a decade ago. A striking evidence of this fact is found in the changes in the character of our teachers' organizations. We used **THE SHIFTING EMPHASIS** to have the Department of Secondary Education in this and that bigger organism, "Associations of College and Preparatory Schools," "High School Principals Associations," and their like, and we have them yet, true enough, but we have in addition "History Teachers Associations," "Classical Conferences," "High School Science Teachers Associations," "Mathematical Conferences" and their like. Then, too, was there not a time when such bodies as the American Historical Association, The American Philological Association, The Modern Language Association of America, counted few, if any secondary teachers in their membership? Only a few years ago the question was broached whether questions of scholarship should not have more place on the programs of teachers associations. Now we have questions of teaching demanding and getting more place and a large place on the programs of scholars' associations. While we are resting a bit in our great work of refurbishing the curriculum, that palladium of our educational slavery, we are employing the leisure thus granted us in learning by heart some great truths which, as like as not, will turn out to be the preamble to the declaration of curriculum-independence. The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.

To go back to a century ago, there was not a cloud then on the educational horizon. Any one would have believed and everyone would have maintained that the problems of education were non-existent. This is the way, **WHEN EVERYTHING IS SETTLED** walk ye in it, was the sum of educational science. One of our best known educational leaders who has recently taken up his residence abroad, asserts that all the great lines of educational development are marked out in the United States for the lifetime of one generation, so that a man who wishes to be in on the ground floor of large educational movements must go abroad to get the chance. But all know that the fathers of 1800 knew several things which were not so, and,

therefore, we yet hope that the sage of 1900 will see one or two things worth while happen in this country in his generation.

This is the day of the individual; the unit is having its innings, the mass is out in the field. The course of study in the individual subject is the center of attraction, the focus of attention, sharing honors only with the individual student and teacher. We are likely to run to excess in this unit-worship before we are through with it; just now we are apt to speak of correlation with a bit of a smile as though it were a huge joke. But better units will make a better whole when they are properly united as they are sure to be. It may look to some as though our educational chain were just now a heap of disconnected links, but what a hammering and polishing those links are getting!

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